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ABSTRACT

This study compares teacher attitudes in the Cumberland County and Putnam County, Tennessee, public school systems before and after professional negotiations. The researchers attempted to gauge teachers' feelings about job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction. A 16-item questionnaire was administered to teachers of both school systems before and after negotiations activities. After negotiation, more teachers in both systems agreed with five statements: (1) "I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is." (2) "I feel I can trust my principal's advice." (3) "I consider myself 'labor,' and the administration 'management.'" (4) "If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching." (5) "I don't like working with parents." Other items showed no change in attitudes or attitude change in only one school system. The researchers felt it was difficult to make general, overall judgments concerning the data. (Author/JM)

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS IN THREE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TENNESSEE BEFORE AND AFTER PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATION

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS IN THREE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TENNESSEE BEFORE AND AFTER PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATION

Statement of the Problem

This study compares teacher attitudes in the Cumberland and Putnam County, Tennessee, public school systems before and after professional negotiation. The comparisons were made to determine the attitudes of classroom teachers toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment and career satisfaction. The teachers in Cumberland County High School and Putnam County High School negotiated contracts through their professional associations with the respective boards of education for the 1979-80 school year. Teachers in the DeKalb County school system did not negotiate a contract for the 1979-80 school year.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it provides insights into the effects of professional negotiation upon the professional attitudes of teachers. Teachers' attitudes in the school systems are compared seeking to determine if the process of professional negotiation causes teachers to have different professional attitudes than they had before professional negotiations.

Research Procedures

The research design for this study consisted of the development of a questionnaire concerning teachers' attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction. Questionnaires were administered to samples of classroom teachers in the public schools

of Cumberland, DeKalb, and Putnam Counties, Tennessee, in the fall of 1978. The samples consisted of teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels in DeKalb County, and to all the teachers in Cumberland County High School in Crossville and Putnam County High School in Cookeville. This was before any of the three school systems had become involved in professional negotiations between the teacher's associations and the boards of education, respectively.

The questionnaire was administered to the classroom teachers of Cumberland County High School and Putnam County High School during the autumn of 1979. The data from the two administrations of the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed to determine comparisons among the school systems before and after professional negotiations. The teachers of DeKalb County elected not to negotiate with the board of education on a contract for the 1979-80 school year.

Summary of Results

The tabulated data on the 16 questionnaire items are presented below followed by a brief analysis:

1. I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam		
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979	Sig. at .05
SA	8.4	11.4	7.4	11.4	15.0	
A	35.8	37.1	51.9	42.9	57.5	
D	44.2	28.6	40.7	37.1	22.5	
SD	11.6	22.9	0	8.6	5.0	

It can be determined from the data that from 1978-79, 10.8 percent more of the teachers agreed with the above statement. The same was true for Putnam County with 18.2 percent more of the teachers agreeing with the statement.

2. I feel my fellow teachers are supporting my efforts in the classroom.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	24.2	22.9	25.9	27.8	46.3
A	65.3	62.9	63.0	63.9	48.8
D	6.3	8.6	11.1	5.6	2.4
SD	4.2	5.7	0.0	2.8	2.4

The comparisons for Cumberland County and Putnam County do not show a great deal of change for this questionnaire item from 1978-79. It can be noted that the strongly agree figure for Putnam County is 18.5 percent higher in 1979.

3. I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	59.4	54.3	63.0	72.2	65.9
A	36.5	25.7	33.3	25.0	31.7
D	0.0	11.4	0.0	2.8	0.0
SD	4.2	8.6	3.7	0.0	2.4

It can be noted that from 1978-79 in Cumberland County, some 16.3 percent more of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed on this item. The percentage of teachers agreeing in Putnam County was about the same from 1978 to 1979.

4. I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	10.6	22.9	25.9	8.1	17.1
A	29.8	28.6	22.2	40.5	34.1
D	42.6	28.6	33.3	40.5	41.5
SD	17.0	20.0	18.5	10.8	7.3

The percentage of teachers agreeing on this item from 1978 to 1979 in both Cumberland and Putnam Counties was about the same in 1978 as in 1979.

5. I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	33.7	37.1	33.3	25.0	12.5
A	38.9	31.4	29.6	52.8	65.0
D	22.1	28.6	29.6	19.4	20.0
SD	5.3	2.9	7.4	2.8	2.5

The percentage of teachers agreeing on this questionnaire item is about the same in both counties for 1978 to 1979.

6. I would not be happy in any job other than teaching.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	28.7	14.7	22.2	11.1	7.5
A	18.1	29.4	25.9	25.0	17.5
D	39.4	35.3	33.3	52.8	62.5
SD	13.8	20.6	18.5	11.1	12.5

There is little change in the percentages from 1978 to 1979 for Cumberland County. However, for Putnam County 11.1 percent more of the teachers agreed with this item in 1978 than in 1979.

7. A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	3.2	11.4	14.8	11.1	2.5
A	18.1	14.3	7.4	11.1	17.5
D	48.9	42.9	44.4	47.2	45.0
SD	29.8	31.4	33.3	30.6	35.0

There is not a great deal of change from 1978 to 1979 for either county on this questionnaire item.

8. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	5.3	17.1	7.4	2.8	4.9
A	9.6	28.6	22.2	5.6	4.9
D	40.4	42.9	33.3	55.6	36.6
SD	44.7	11.4	37.0	36.1	53.7

It can be noted that in Cumberland County the 1979 data indicate that 16.1 percent less of the teachers felt that their principal does things which interfere with regular classroom activities as compared with 1978. The percentage of difference in Putnam County is about the same from 1978 to 1979.

9. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam		Sig. at .03
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979	
SA	48.9	22.9	42.3	44.4	40.0	
A	35.1	48.6	50.0	44.4	52.5	
D	9.6	22.9	3.8	8.3	0.0	
SD	6.4	5,7	3.8	2.8	7.5	

The data show that the percentage of teachers who felt they could trust their principal's advice increased some 20.8 percent from 1978 to 1979. During the same period in Putnam County the increase was 3.7 percent

10. The longer a teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	45.3	52.9	46.2	45.9	43.6
A	37.9	29.4	34.6	35.1	46.2
D	12.6	17.6	19.2	13.5	7.7
SD	4.2	0.0	0.0	5.4	2.6

There is little change from 1978 to 1979 on this questionnaire item in Cumberland County. In Putnam County, there was some 8.8 percent more of the teachers who indicated that the longer the teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive in 1979 than in 1978.

11. I consider myself "labor," and the administration, "management."

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	14.9	17.1	26.9	2.7	10.0
A	24.5	14.3	23.1	10.8	15.0
D	40.4	22.9	26.9	56.8	55.0
SD	20.2	45.7	23.1	29.7	20.0

In Cumberland County from 1978 to 1979, 18.6 percent more of the teachers said they considered themselves "labor" and the administration "management." In Putnam County during the same time some 11.5 percent more of the teachers agreed that they considered themselves "labor" and the administration "management."

12. If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	33.3	31.4	19.2	19.4	13.2
A	45.2	37.1	34.6	52.8	50.0
D	9.7	17.8	30.8	19.4	23.7
SD	11.8	8.6	15.4	8.3	13.2

It can be determined from the data that 13.7 percent more of the teachers in Cumberland County and 9 percent more of the teachers in Putnam County agreed that if they were beginning college study again they would prepare for teaching in 1978 than in 1979.

13. I don't like working with parents.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	2.4
A	6.3	2.9	7.4	2.7	7.3
D	46.9	57.1	59.3	64.9	65.9
SD	46.9	40.0	29.6	32.4	24.4

The data show from 1978 to 1979 that in Cumberland County 8.2 percent more of the teachers agreed that they did not like working with parents, while in Putnam County 7 percent more of the teachers agreed with the statement.

14. As a teacher I feel I must do things that the principal really should do.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam		Sig. at .03
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979	
SA	5.3	6.5	3.7	0.0	5.0	
A	17.9	32.3	3.7	8.8	2.5	
D	53.7	35.5	70.4	55.9	57.5	
SD	23.2	25.8	22.2	35.3	35.0	

In Cumberland County from 1978 to 1979 there was a dramatic decrease in the number of teachers that felt they must do things that the principal really should do. Some 31.4 percent fewer of the teachers agreed with the statement in 1979 than in 1978. In Putnam County the percentages were about the same from 1978 to 1979.

15. I work actively with my department or grade level for its concerns.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	52.1	57.1	33.3	61.1	50.0
A	43.8	37.1	51.9	36.1	47.5
D	4.2	5.7	14.8	2.8	0.0
SD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5

There was not a great deal of change from 1978 to 1979 for either Cumberland County or Putnam County on this questionnaire item.

16. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.

	DeKalb	Cumberland		Putnam	
	1978	1978	1979	1978	1979
SA	6.3	0.0	3.7	5.4	0.0
A	4.2	8.8	3.7	0.0	2.9
D	53.7	41.2	33.3	45.9	25.7
SD	35.8	50.0	59.3	48.6	71.4

It can be noted on this item that there is little difference in the percentages from 1978 to 1979 in Cumberland County. However, for Putnam County some 2.5 percent fewer of the teachers wish they were teaching somewhere else in 1979 than in 1978.

It seems difficult and subjective to make general, overall judgements concerning the data. Perhaps the greatest value of the study is in the consideration of the data separately by each questionnaire item. It is interesting to note that from 1978 to 1979 on the questionnaire items considered positive, 2 thru 7, 9, 12, and 15, for Cumberland County the percentages

for five questionnaire items declined and four increased, while for Putnam County teachers, three declined and six increased. On the questionnaire items considered negative, 8, 11, 13, 14, and 16, for Cumberland County the percentages for two questionnaire items declined and three increased, while for Putnam County two declined and three increased.

TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

Please respond to each of the sixteen statements below by selecting what you feel is your most appropriate response. The choice of responses is: 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-disagree, 4-strongly disagree. Please indicate your choice of response by placing the appropriate numeral in the space to the left of each statement. The information you provide for this study will be used in such a way that individual responses cannot be identified. We appreciate very much your participation in this study.

_____1. I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is.

_____2. I feel my fellow teachers are supporting my efforts in the classroom.

_____3. I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal.

_____4. I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before.

_____5. I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before.

_____6. I would not be happy in any job other than teaching.

_____7. A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction.

_____8. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.

_____9. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.

____10. The longer a teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive.

____11. I consider myself "labor", and the administration, "management".

____12. If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching.

____13. I don't like working with parents.

____14. As a teacher do I feel I must do things that the principal really should do.

____15. I work actively with my department or grade level for its concerns.

____16. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.